'All Elements of National Power': Re-Organizing the Interagency Structure and Process for Victory in the Long War

Strategic Insights, Volume V, Issue 6 (July 2006)

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Introduction

> *"The Problem with the War on Terror is that DoD is at War, the rest of the United States Government is not"*[1]

On first glance, the leader of the Executive Branch of Government would intuitively and by constitution be the elected President of the United States. The Executive Branch exists with the other two branches, Legislative and Judicial, to create a check and balance in governance. This triumvirate was created by the Founding Fathers to introduce a sense of relative stability into the chaos of federal governance of an entire population.

However within the Executive Branch, the elected head of the Branch—the President of the United States (POTUS)—has challenges directing all elements of the Executive Branch. Although the general public may be unaware of these challenges, they are clear to anyone working national efforts in the Interagency environment during the Long War.

Some challenges are because of legal authorities, some because of organizational issues, some are because of human behavior, some fall in the other categories, such as informal chains of command that have developed over time; for example elements in Executive Branch departments that have developed strong congressional liaisons that on some occasions run at cross purposes with the direction of the elected leader and the politically appointed civilians of the Executive Branch.

Applying this to the "Long War,"[2] the national Problem Statement becomes: "How can the President effectively harness, focus, and lead all elements of National Power (in the Executive Branch) to victory in the 'Long War?'"

Report Documentation Page

1. REPORT DATE **JUL 2006**	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED **00-00-2006 to 00-00-2006**

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE **'All Elements of National Power': Re-Organizing the Interagency Structure and Process for Victory in the Long War**	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
	5b. GRANT NUMBER
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER
6. AUTHOR(S)	5d. PROJECT NUMBER
	5e. TASK NUMBER
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) **Naval Postgraduate School,Center for Contemporary Conflict,1 University Circle,Monterey,CA,93943**	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT **Approved for public release; distribution unlimited**

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT

15. SUBJECT TERMS

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT **unclassified**	b. ABSTRACT **unclassified**	c. THIS PAGE **unclassified**	**Same as Report (SAR)**	**10**	

Restatement of Problem Statement and Way Ahead

Roosevelt. Marshall. Eisenhower. MacArthur—Giants and Legends in our heritage. They did it in World War II—they coordinated and directed an international Geo-Political struggle against Totalitarianism and they were successful—no email, no PowerPoint, no VTC.

They did have an army of clerk typists that surpassed current active force structure. But with much more primitive information systems and processes, they were able to establish a decisive "clarity of command."[3]

Reagan—another Giant and Legend—he also did it with infantile versions of our current technology and led us to victory in the Cold War.

All of these greats out of our history—they did it—they assimilated, analyzed, and gave coherent direction without our current technology.

In today's environment, the President of the United States (POTUS) has obstacles that significantly degrade the ability to lead the 15 Departments and dozens of direct report and subordinate Agencies. There are issues that have been previously cited.

Perhaps though, the greatest degradation to effectiveness comes from a weak and undeveloped Interagency capability to staff complex issues for POTUS decisions and then follow up on Department execution of POTUS decisions.

Not since World War II has our country been faced with such an urgent challenge. We currently must not just plan for, but actually execute a world wide campaign during an actual War.

The Cold War, although filled with "Brush Fire" and "Proxy Wars" was not as asymmetrical nor challenging. In many ways the Soviet threat was "templateable" and predictable. The NSC process was more sufficient because of the relative creeping nature of the conflict. Soviet funded initiatives or actions constantly destabilized regimes, but with exceptions for the Invasion of South Korea in 1950 and the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, our intelligence resources connected the dots and provided enough advance warning for friendly resources and counter-actions to be applied as a counter to the Soviet threat.

Because of a vastly more complex, asymmetrical, unpredictable struggle combined with 50 plus years of accumulated plaque build up in the Interagency environment, the current Interagency process does not provide the POTUS the WW II ability to fully harness and focus all of the capabilities of the United States Government.

A new Interagency Process and Structure to more fully harness all elements of national power is needed to lead us to victory in the Long War.

The Existing Structure and Process Encourages an Unrealistic Level of Direct Report Activities

One reason for degradation of effectiveness is the breadth of POTUS Command. Applying the rule of 3 to 5 for leadership situations (i.e. any reasonably competent leader can effectively monitor/direct 3 to 5 activities at one time. Effectiveness of leadership declines as more direct report activities are added), it appears there is an overage of direct report activities to the POTUS. Disturbingly, this breadth of command approaches the model of centralization that Saddam exercised before OIF.[4]

From an Army structural model, a Division Commander directly commands 3 to 5 Brigades or Task Forces. There may be situations where it may be more, but overall, the rule of 3 to 5 normally applies. Looking at American Army Structures in the 20th Century, a comparable situation where an Army Commander had 15 major subordinate direct reports and dozens of second level direct reports is hard to find.

Using the Air Component Commander model, the same applies. Again, a situation where an Air Component Commander had a similar breadth of command is not readily found.[5]

Yet we burden the POTUS with a vast number of direct report functions. The POTUS should have a more streamlined Executive Branch Structure—and a robust National Security Council/Interagency Staff Structure would help in this.

In large parts because of this self-inflicted structure, instead of the POTUS directing a unified output of National Will, it is numerous outputs, often at odds and contradictory to each other. We are stumbling at the goal line of victory—what in the past was the pinnacle in sophisticated nation state operational art has become mired in departmental lack of interest at best—intentional counter-efforts at worst.

The Elements of National Power

There are four basic elements of National Power.[6] For each one, different elements of the Executive Branch take the lead. The elements and their associated leads are:

Diplomatic: Influencing the international situation through Bi-Lateral and Multi-Lateral agreements, negotiations, and engagement with the United States Department of State as the overall lead. The Diplomatic element is conducted with foreign nations, the United Nations, and also Non-Governmental/International Organizations.

Economic: Shaping international activity through United States government spending and taxation (both discretionary and entitlement program activities)[7](Office of Management and Budget as the overall lead), policy on money supply and interest rates (the Federal Reserve Board as lead), trade agreements, trade policy, and other negotiated trade arrangements in addition to U.S. Government policy to promote international trade activity (both U.S. Department of Commerce and Department of State) and sometimes American Trade Interests. Although boring and mundane compared to the other elements of National Power—this element especially the money supply and interest rate aspect—is critical for stability both domestically and overseas.

Informational: Although stated in the Joint Publication as one of the elements of National Power, this really does not exist anymore as a focused and active element of United States National Power. Informational is understood to mean the U.S. Government communicating it's intent and views—i.e. Strategic Communication. The lack of clarity on this element of National Power is all the more reason for a new National Security Council Structure and the new structure to resurrect "Informational" as a bona fide element of National Power.

The United States Information Agency (USIA) used to exist[8] but went away in 1999. The Department of State is attempting to re-invigorate this,[9] and has brought in former Presidential Advisor Karen Hughes to lead the existing subordinate Department of State organization focused on Public Communication.

After seeing the intense rancor in the recently completed Quadrennial Defense Review 2006 process in regards to Strategic Communications and the sometimes visceral reaction by some quarters when even a hint of a coordinated U.S. Governmental Interagency Informational Process

is brought up, we have de facto surrendered the battlefield on this to the enemy in the Long War.[10] This surrender has occurred because of our (the different players in the US Government) inability to come to a common understanding of policy and execution roles. We may not realize the obviousness of our disarray on this element, but the enemy does.

Until we can coherently and rationally talk in US Government circles about the US Government telling our side of the story to the various audiences without emotional accusations of, "spinning the truth" and "Vietnam-like propaganda", we're non-mission capable on this element of National Power.

Military: This is the one we of course know best and obviously DoD is the lead. Often times, it is the only element of National Power that is resourced, has standing planning[11] and execution processes, and a professional career personnel staff structure to have effect on the situation.

This is not a criticism of the non-DoD U.S. Government Departments and agencies, it is an acknowledgement of reality—and a need further develop the other elements of National Power (through a more robust Interagency process) to give them resources and capabilities.[12]

Whether it be a domestic situation such as defending the Homeland (to include responding to a natural disaster), prosecuting the major fronts in the Long War, or dealing with an emerging front in the Long War (perhaps Iran and it's nuclear capacity), the Military element of National Power is often the immediate default selection.
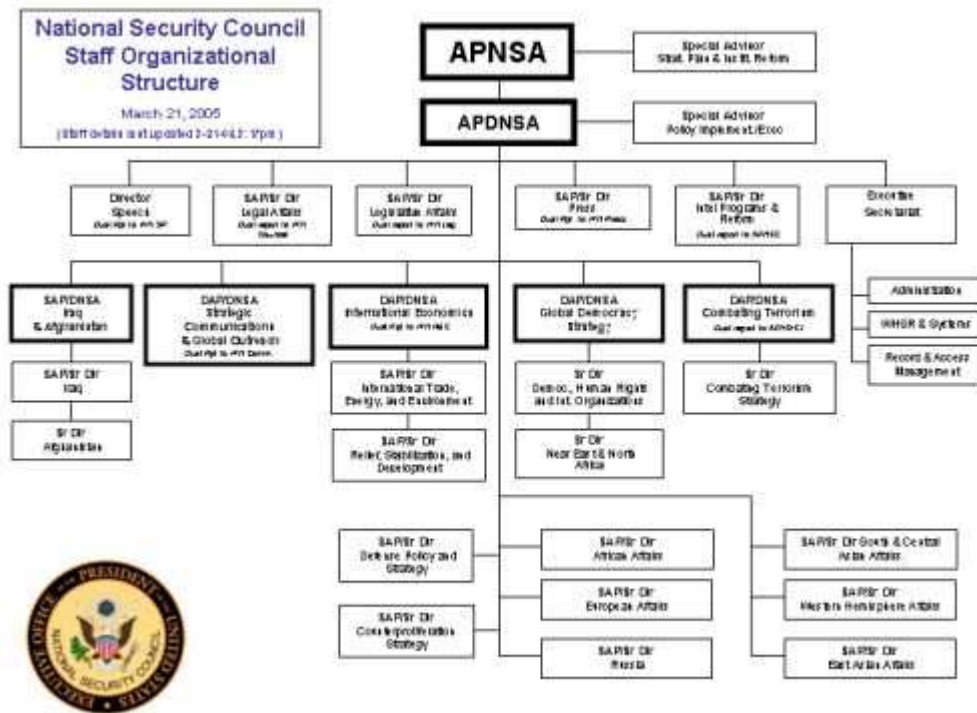
A more robust Interagency Staff could better plan, resource, and execute non-military elements of National Power, reserving the Military option for picking the right fight at the right place and not making it the default selection because the non-military elements are primitive in their capability compared to the Military element of National Power.

Now interestingly enough—the Joint Publication did not cite intelligence (collection or special direct action activities) as one of the elements of National Power. So for completeness, Intelligence has been grouped with the Military element of National Power. This may not be fair, but it's the best placement when dealing with the structure stated in the Joint Publication. Perhaps the Joint Pub intent was that Intelligence fit entirely or partially under the "Informational" element of National Power, however to not fragment this crucial aspect of National Power, it has been fit entirely in meaning and scope within the Military element of National Power.

What Would a Robust National Security Council and Interagency Staff Structure and Process Look Like?

Looking at NSC History, the closest model for an "operational" NSC is the NSC structure that existed under President Eisenhower.[13] This structure, although still underdeveloped from what is being proposing came closest to having an end to end process in national security actions. To see where our departure point is, shown below is the current organizational chart of the National Security Council:

Figure 1: NSC Current Organizational Chart

Taking the model of the Chairman's Joint Staff as a straw-person starting point, presented in text is the basic proposed structure. Each of these major staff positions would be filled by the appropriate U.S. Government Agency that would provide these senior leaders for these positions on a three to four year developmental rotation.

These would be required rotations for retention and promotion in the senior ranks—drawing upon the intent and findings in the "Beyond Goldwater-Nichols Report."[14] In addition to qualification for senior service, hopefully this out of Department/Agency rotation would help all seniors think "Interagency" (like "Joint" in DoD) and help improve a US Government allegiance, chipping away at the single Department/Agency mindset. Only the leadership positions are defined, but there would be resourced staff elements beneath the leadership positions and many of the positions would be staffed by GS14s/GS15s gaining their Interagency Qualification for retention and promotion.

Some of these Interagency Staff elements may have directive staff legal authority, so the original National Security Act that set up the NSC would have to be revisited. The intent is not to usurp the appointed and confirmed Department or Agency Secretary, but just like a higher staff headquarters in the military, the higher staff has some limited real or perceived authority to ensure the commander's intent is carried out.

Yes of course this structure will immediately be criticized as too militaristic, too regimented, too extreme by those elements of the Executive Branch who are comfortable with the status quo.

Chief of Staff (4 star equiv): This would consist of a Chief of Staff to be the "chief operating officer" (COO) of the NSC—they would be the gatekeeper, mule-driver, Senior Chief, etc. for the organization. They would directly report to the President's National Security Advisor. There would be a Chief of Staff and two Deputy Chiefs of Staff (perhaps one deputy focused on operations,

one on support). The DoD, DoS, DoJ would rotate these three positions among their senior selectees (i.e. at all times each of these departments would have a senior filling one of these positions).

Interagency-1 (IA-1 like, J-1) (OPM Senior SES): This would be the staff office to deal with "J-1" like issues. For example, producing and then enforcing the Joint Manning Roster for a contingency Interagency Task Force whether it be in CONUS or abroad. An SES out of OPM would rotate here as one of the qualification opportunities for senior service.

The Joint Staff J-1 was the driving force behind creation of the Joint Manning Rosters (JMRs)— the detailed, by position, roster by ministry—for the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) (Dec 2002—June 2004). Producing the JMR was a great step forward in giving structure to the rapid stand up of the CPA. However, there was no Interagency enforcement mechanism to ensure agencies filled their positions at the CPA. Throughout the life of the CPA, many ministries and staff offices were never staffed at greater than 50% of the authorized positions.

In addition an IA-1 would be the ideal enforcement entity for the recommendations of the Beyond Goldwaters-Nichols report[15] and subsequent legislation to enforce Interagency rotations of Professional Civil Servants before promotions to and among the GS-15 and SES levels.

Interagency-2 (NDI four star equivalent): The senior leader for this position would come out of the Director of National Intelligence's office or one of his/her subordinate organizations. This would be the top level intelligence briefing organization for the NSC and the POTUS. They would have a small staff of the best operationally oriented intelligence thinkers who can rapidly synthesize the voluminous amounts of U.S. Government intelligence into a brief, meaningful, actionable national position. The intent over time is to breakdown the culture of "information keep away" that many Department's perpetuate from the senior to the junior levels. Focusing on the enterprise of the entire U.S. Government is a mutually beneficial end-state and not a threat to individual Department interests.

Interagency-3 (DoD/DoS four star equivalent): This would have two senior positions—a lead, and a deputy who would overlap (i.e. one would spend about 18-24 months as the deputy and then move to the lead position). The two positions would continually be filled by both DoS and DoD, ensuring each one filled one of the positions. IA-3 is where the existing contingency NSC working groups would reside as well as a current operations cell that would monitor execution of approved Presidential Decisions. The evolving National Counter-Terrorism Center and Counter-Proliferation Center would be absorbed into IA-3.

The Operations Staff would be one of the more problematic staff functions and would require "norming" over a period time to establish formal and informal US Government operational processes and establish boundaries of involvement. A lot of friction is to be expected in this area, but the intent is to produce a synthesized U.S. Government operational position (just like a synthesized U.S. Government Intelligence position).

Interagency-4 (DHS/DoD four star equivalent): Like IA-3, this would be have two senior positions. The positions would overlap and would alternate between DHS and DOD and when one is the lead, one would be the deputy. This would give an Interagency flavor and perspective to U.S. Government enterprise logistics, maintenance, and transportation issues, and would help migrate the Interagency from the automatic default of looking at DoD as the resource provider in all contingency situations. From the Hurricane Katrina example, DoD provided the immense balance of resources to assist in hurricane relief, despite another government agency (DHS) being the lead U.S. Government agency. IA-4 would help develop these capabilities outside of DoD.

Interagency-5 (DoS/DoD/DHS/DoJ four star equivalent): This position would rotate at three year intervals between the four listed departments. DoD is the only USG Agency with a robust strategic planning structure and culture.[16] IA-5 would be the responsible IA element for USG Conplans (Concept Plans). DoD Conplans have been crucial reference documents to refer to in contingency events. IA-5 would help socialize these processes, behaviors, and written plans across the entire U.S. Government. The functions normally addressed by a "J-7" type element (U.S. Government level exercises) would reside in the IA-5.

Most of the legacy working groups in the NSC that are not contingency focused would reside in IA-5. They would continue to cultivate national level policy in an immersed Interagency environment.

Interagency-6 (DoD, DHS, and DoS three star equivalents): This position would rotate between the three departments. One of the key missions for this staff element would be the critical task of enforcing information sharing and data standards in the U.S. Government. Information would be accessible and support user defined operational pictures at all levels through out the U.S. Government. IA-6 would be the lead in fielding Net-Centric behavior across the U.S. Government.

Interagency-8 (OMB four star equivalent): This staff function would support, not supplant OMB for National and Homeland Security activities. Creating a simpler, but cross-walked IA budget for National Security issues would help bring order, discipline, and visibility for the chaotic nature of the budget (at least the approximately 18% of the Federal Budget that funds National Security/Homeland Defense issues). Duplicate programs would be identified and merged for efficiencies and economies of scales would be greatly increased by consolidated U.S. Government activities in these areas—especially Research and Development, Procurement, and Construction.

Interagency-9 (Rotation among DoD, DoJ, and DoS three star equivalents): Responsibility for the contentious issue of U.S. Government Strategic Communications would stop here. This staff element would be the traffic director for the U.S. Government message stream. Centralized coordination, yet decentralized execution in the different functional areas of Public Affairs, Information Operations, Military Support to Public Diplomacy, and others would take place.

A great example of the problem set here is what should the U.S. Government do about Jihadist websites. If you ask the different players in Strategic Communication on what the U.S. Government should do about these sites and each will give you a different answer—all of which are correct. The problem is our execution in these areas is uncoordinated and without coordination will nullify each other. The IA-9 will be the lead to resolve these issues in the Interagency environment.

Interagency-10 (Rotation among DoJ, DoD, DoS three star equivalents): In the classic military staff structure, Legal Counsel is usually considered "Special Staff" and not a stand alone equivalent staff element. Because of the immense legal issues involved in the Long War and today's international world, IA-10 would exist to provide the coordinated U.S. Government legal opinion for the Executive Branch. The intent is to provide operationally oriented legal support (just like operationally oriented intelligence) to support, but not take over operations.

This definition is substantive, not semantic and is meant to dislodge the legal paralysis that can occur with operational matters (for example the events surrounding the semi-urban legend of what actually took place with the "can we kill UBL by crashing the un-armed Predator drone into him" scenario that may have taken place in late 2001—that's gist for an entire article by itself).

These previous ten staff elements provide the framing for a robust Interagency staff structure. Of course there is much more work to be done such as establishing a joint manning roster, obtaining

office/facility space, figuring out where this fits in the federal budget structure and so on—but the intent is to articulate a basic structure for this new entity.

Conclusion

This paper is intended to present a new paradigm of structure and process for a better Interagency process. Anyone who is educated and experienced in these matters knows the reality of US Government palace intrigue and must be intellectually honest in acknowledging the cultural behavior of individual US Government Departments and Agencies to default to courses of action that benefit their elements at the cost of a coherent U.S. Government position and great degradation of capabilities provided to the POTUS. It will take legislation, re-education, and time to implement the processes and behaviors of an improved Interagency perspective, but our citizens and Coalition Partners deserve better. We are at War, it's called the Long War, and we must prevail.

About the Author

John R. Mills is a Strategic Planner and Senior Program Analyst for the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Networks and Information Integration in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. He is responsible for Strategic Planning and input into the Quadrennial Defense Review, Strategic Planning Guidance, National Military Strategy, and other documents that reflect the transformation of the Department to a Net-Centric operational environment. In addition he provides guidance and direction to MITRE Corporation, a DoD Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC) consisting of an annual labor effort of almost 2,000 labor years that provide world class, senior technical and operational support to DoD.

John has 23 years of military service including active duty, reserve duty, peacetime, and three combat tours. After 9/11, John was involuntarily recalled to military service and spent two years conducting operations and planning with the Joint Staff (J-3 SOD and J-5 Middle East) at the Pentagon and Joint Staff (J-5) at Central Command. During this period, among other things, he helped plan, organize, and implement three contingency military forces including the Afghan National Army, the Free Iraqi Forces, and the New Iraqi Army and other Iraqi security forces. John also spent time on the ground in Iraq in 2003 helping to stand up the post-Saddam Iraqi Security Forces. He also worked on a variety of contingency, classified, and compartmented programs that required interagency and inter-governmental planning and coordination.

He is qualified and experienced in Civil Affairs, Public Affairs, Psychological Operations, Military Intelligence, and Joint and Combined planning, and operations from the tactical to the operational level. John has served in Iraq (twice – most recently in summer/fall 2003 to help stand up the Iraqi Security Forces as a Joint Staff Representative), Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bosnia, Korea, and in the United States. John is currently a drilling reserve Lieutenant Colonel in the Joint Chief of Staff's Strategy and Plans (J-5) Middle East Division and works War on Terror and Middle East Security issues on a regular basis.

Prior to joining the Office of the Secretary of Defense, John was a Program Analyst and also a Contracting Officer at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). He spent 12 years at the FAA working on major systems including the largest FAA automation implementation program, the en-route Display System Replacement effort. In addition he has had oversight on scheduling, Earned Value analysis, metrics, and program reporting.

John has a bachelor's degree from the University of Washington and a master's degree from Golden Gate University. He is married to Kathie Lynn Mills and they have two children, Michael John Mills, and Sarah-Kate Meiping Mills. They reside in Stafford, VA.

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3. The Honorable Mr. Newt Gingrich, February, 2005.

4. Kevin M. Woods, *Iraqi Perspectives Project: A View of Operation Iraqi Freedom from Saddam's Senior Leadership,* Joint Center for Operational Analysis (Joint Forces Command) and the Institute for Defense Analyses, 2006.

5. *Mighty 8th Cross-Reference:* Looking at one of the largest American Air Power organizations, the 8th Air Force of World War II, they had three Bombardment Divisions and Three Air (Fighter) Divisions—so actually two major subordinate organizations—Bombardment and Fighter.

6. *Joint Publication 1: Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States, 14 November 2000*, Page v: "The United States relies for its security on the complementary application of the basic instruments of national power: diplomatic, economic, informational, and military. Guided by national security policy and strategy, the Armed Forces of the United States shape and employ the military instrument to advance and defend national security interests and objectives."

7. See http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/pdf/Economy-07.pdf for current Executive Branch policy on the economy. Even with current spending on the "Long War"—DoD and all discretionary spending is less than 20% of the Federal Budget, see: http://www.kowaldesign.com/budget/percentages.html.

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12. *Ibid.* Please see many elements of Murdock's work. This cites the need for more robust non-DoD capabilities from a professional staff structure, Chairman's Joint Staff J-5 like planning capability, and more operational abilities in the non-DoD U.S. Government environment.

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